

**BARD GRADUATE CENTER ANNOUNCES 2021-22 PROGRAMMING
FEATURING EXHIBITIONS, PUBLICATIONS, AND EVENTS ON
DESIGN HISTORY, DECORATIVE ARTS, AND MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES**

New York, NY (May 11, 2021) – Bard Graduate Center today announced its 2021-22 programs, which feature thought provoking exhibitions, publications, and public programs that advance the study of design history, decorative arts, and material culture. To complement its MA and PhD academic programs, BGC’s public offerings explore the often-overlooked aspects of the material world, engaging audiences—from the public to scholars alike—in new ways of thinking about art, design, and everyday objects.

This fall, BGC’s Gallery will reopen to the public premiering a slate of exhibitions that investigate under-recognized aspects of material culture across time periods, geography, and disciplines: from 16th-century lacemaking and Victorian majolica to contemporary meditations on ‘The Object’ and the elusive meanings of object conservation. In addition to exhibitions, BGC will present a range of events and publications with an interdisciplinary approach to material culture studies that reflects the intellectual rigor underpinning BGC’s work.

2021 – 22 Program Highlights

EXHIBITIONS

- ***Majolica Mania: Transatlantic Pottery in England and the United States, 1850–1915***
September 24, 2021 – January 2, 2022
Majolica Mania, an exhibition and accompanying three-volume catalogue, will create new awareness and appreciation for 19th-century English and American majolica. Colorful, wildly imaginative, and technically innovative, this ceramic ware was functional and aesthetic, modern and historicizing. Its subject matter reflects a range of Victorian preoccupations, from botany and zoology to popular humor and the macabre. The exhibition will explore the considerable impact of majolica, from wares used in domestic conservatories and dining rooms to monumental pieces displayed at world’s fairs.

The largest exhibition of majolica ever mounted, *Majolica Mania* will feature approximately 350 objects drawn from major private collections in the United States as well as from leading public collections in America and England, including the Maryland Historical Society, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, and Victoria and Albert Museum. A [digital exhibition](#), a companion to the in-person Gallery exhibition, is now online.

- ***Richard Tuttle: What is the Object?***
February – July 2022
Curated by the celebrated contemporary artist Richard Tuttle, the exhibition is BGC’s most experimental to date. Reflecting the artist’s inquisitive and playful approach to meaning-making, visitors will be invited to a tactile interaction with 75 items drawn from Tuttle’s personal collection of objects. The visitor will be prompted to lift objects from their pedestals, touching and interacting with items ranging from ceramic teacups and decorative sculptures to vintage

fabrics and antique curios. Each object will be accompanied by an index card outlining the object's biography—clue cards that hint at Tuttle's own relationship with his collection, amassed over decades. While present, this information is secondary to the visitor's own experience of the collection. In holding the objects in their own hands, visitors plumb the layers of meaning that they themselves assign to the objects, bringing to life the conceptual goals of the exhibition. The exhibition will also feature some of Tuttle's art works as well as sculptural furniture he designed to display the objects, calling into question *What is the Object?*

- ***Conserving Active Matter***

February – July 2022

Conserving Active Matter explores the science, philosophy, and art of conserving objects in an era of dynamic materials, tangible and intangible threats to cultural heritage, and shifting academic perspectives on conservation. The exhibition gives audiences an appreciation for conservation as a subjective practice, performed in different ways across cultures, but a common thread throughout history that marks our shared humanity. Featuring objects from five different continents ranging from mummification tools and religious statuary to European paintings and garments from around the world, *Conserving Active Matter* encourages audiences to consider different philosophies and traditions of conservation.

- ***Shaped by the Loom: Weaving Worlds in the American Southwest***

Launches February 2022

Presented as a digital exhibition, *Shaped by the Loom* will showcase the American Museum of Natural History's collection of textiles created by Indigenous people from the greater American Southwest, bringing into dialogue multiple aspects of making, including the tangible and the intangible, the visual and the tacit. By exploring the various modes and contexts of intercultural influence and adaptation, the exhibition examines the trans-historical conditions that catalyzed changing practices within the medium. *Shaped by the Loom* strives to de-formalize Navajo weaving to shift our analysis away from the development of periods, designs, and styles toward an alternative framework that emphasizes Native agency in the history of textile production.

- ***Threads of Power: Lace in the Collection of the Textilmuseum St. Gallen***

September 2022 – January 2023

Threads of Power will explore the artisanship and cultural history of this iconic art form, valued for its intricate and open patterns that at once shield and reveal what lies beneath, whether it be velvet or skin. Organized in collaboration with the Textilmuseum in St. Gallen, Switzerland, the exhibition will explore the development of lace from its 16th-century origins to the present, bringing together approximately 175 examples of laceworks from the Textilmuseum's collection that will be on view in the U.S. for the first time. The exhibition will illustrate how handmade lace became a signifier of power and wealth in the courts of Habsburg Spain and Bourbon France until it fell from favor in the wake of the French Revolution. In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, lace's popularity was revived as technology enabled machine-made laces. The exhibition will also include new research focused on lace technologies, practices, and fashions from the 19th to the 21st centuries, and showcase commissions of lace from St. Gallen by contemporary fashion designers. Contemporary couture closes the exhibition, revealing new innovations in lace production that will shape this global industry's future.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- ***Disability Cultures, Creativity, and Consciousness: Art in the Time of a Pandemic***

May 15, 2021

Organized in collaboration with Dr. Therí A. Pickens, consultant to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, this two-part series will interrogate and challenge questions of access and disability in museums, education, and the art world at-large, with insights from field experts and artists.

In '[Art in the Time of a Pandemic](#)' the discussion will explore how the pandemic has influenced artistic production, and how people with disabilities have showcased their artistry during this time. The first installment in this series '[Posing against the Ages: Disability, Queerness, Race in Fashion](#)' is available online.

A professor of English at Bates College, Dr. Pickens' research focuses on Arab American and African American literatures and cultures, disability studies, philosophy, and literary theory. Dr. Pickens also serves as a consultant on "Crip the Met," an initiative that fosters the inclusion of disability narratives in museum interpretation.

- ***Individuals against Individualism!***

This series explores the role of collaboration and collectivism as a radical political act. BGC, Chinatown Art Brigade, and artist, activist, and author Gregory Sholette highlight the important work of past collectives and provide a platform to discuss contemporary collective work.

Beyond Sustainability: Cultural Organizing for Social Justice

May 17, 2021

Curated and moderated by members of the Chinatown Art Brigade, this conversation is designed to shed light on how cultural collectives have developed new pathways for grassroots organizing, mutual aid, and creative activism, all while celebrating community resilience and resistance. Questions to be explored include how collectives are re-evaluating, adapting, and creatively shifting to meet the challenges of this moment. This program will highlight collectives that use cultural organizing practices to address gentrification and systemic racism through an intersectional lens.

Past events in this series include: *From Spaces of Resistance to the Architecture of Repair*, a conversation examining the evolution of New York City's Lower East Side and the forms of collective self-organizing that emerged as a result of economic, political, environmental crises.

PUBLICATIONS

- ***What is Research?***

In 2019, Bard Graduate Center convened a group of artists, scientists, and humanists—all recipients of MacArthur Fellowships—for three evenings of discussions exploring the concept and practice of research. This volume is a record of these conversations which were moderated by BGC Dean Peter N. Miller, himself a MacArthur Fellow, and featured theater director Annie Dorsen, biomedical researcher Elodie Ghedin, sculptor Tom Joyce, physicist Hideo Mabuchi, poet Campbell McGrath, photographer and filmmaker An-My Lê, neuroscientist Sheila Nirenberg, geochemist Terry Plank, and historian Marina Rustow.

- ***Object—Event—Performance***
Developed as a resource on contemporary conservation for art historians, scholars of dance and theater studies, curators, and conservators, this volume revisits the traditional notions of conservation that approach works of art as static, fixed, and permanent objects. The contributors interrogate what it means to conserve works that fundamentally address and embody the notion of change and through this questioning, reevaluate the meaning of art, of objects, and of materiality itself. *Object—Event—Performance* considers a selection of post-1960s works that have all been chosen for their instability, changeability, performance elements, and processes that pose questions about their relationship to conservation practices.
- ***West 86th***
West 86th is an academic journal that reaffirms BGC’s commitment to expanding the conversation regarding the content, meaning, and significance of material culture. *West 86th* is available in print and online and includes: scholarly articles; review articles: primary source translations; book, catalogue, and exhibition reviews; research inquiries; letters to the editor; and supplementary digital material integral to articles. Past issues have featured new scholarship on the ties between Belgian Art Nouveau and imperialism in the Congo (Deborah Silverman), the early career of Christian Dior (Lourdes Font), and the origins of antiquarianism in Mexico City (Miruna Achim).
- ***Source***
Founded in 1981, *Source* is a scholarly journal with succinct articles on art history, covering topics spanning antiquity to the present and including western and non-western art. A forum for scholars to present ideas and speculations for specialists and non-specialists alike, past issues have included articles such as: ‘How Did Caravaggio Light His Subjects?’ (Troy Thomas); ‘Diego Rivera’s First Peasant’ (Kathryn E. O’Rourke), and ‘Michelangelo: Body as Bow’ (Edward J. Olszewski).

ADVANCING THE FIELD

Bard Graduate Center is investing in programs that encourage new perspectives on the study of the material world to ensure the field’s continued vibrancy and relevance. These programs range from introducing young people to the study of material culture, to initiatives that engage a diverse range of scholars in BGC’s research, study, and teaching.

- ***Lab for Teen Thinkers***
Summer 2021/22
The Lab for Teen Thinkers is a public humanities program that prepares rising high school juniors and seniors for future academic and professional success in the fields of material culture, decorative arts, and design history through a summer program that includes mentoring and internship opportunities. The program offers a behind-the-scenes look at how New York City museums function and gives teens the unique opportunity to study objects and artifacts with a variety of scholars and curators. Teen Thinkers contribute their research and scholarship with the larger academic community at Bard Graduate Center, influencing how others might learn and think about material culture.

This year’s Lab for Teen Thinkers is expanding to include a partnership with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to present “Art Detectives,” a free virtual summer course led by BGC professor Jennifer Mass. This course is a unique opportunity to study with a variety of museum

conservators, scientists, and PhD students working in the fields of art conservation and cultural heritage science in which students will gain an understanding of studio art practice, materials identification, as well as the philosophy and ethics surrounding the research and preservation of cultural heritage.

- **Partnership with LaGuardia Community College**

Ongoing

Established in 2019, BGC's partnership with LaGuardia Community College in Queens brings LaGuardia students in dialogue with BGC faculty and staff to produce [digital exhibitions](#) based on student research. In 2021, students will focus on objects of adornment that have specific cultural significance to them, learning about their material composition and history, and preparing to curate an online exhibition featuring these objects.

- **Fields of the Future Podcast**

Ongoing

Featuring conversations between BGC faculty and fellows and their guests, the Fields of the Future podcast amplifies the voices and highlights the work of under-represented scholars, artists, and writers who are injecting new narratives into object-centered thinking. Past guests include: Rapheal Begay (on 'Life and Art on the Navajo Nation'), Samia Henni ('Relearning Architecture, Exhibiting, and Teaching'), Jaipreet Viridi (Disability Objects in the Archives), and Tanya Aguiñiga ('Making Metabolizing the Border'). Podcast episodes are available on Soundcloud, Spotify, Apple podcasts, and on bgc.bard.edu.

ANNUAL AWARDS AND PRIZES

- **Iris Foundation Awards**

The Iris Foundation Awards honor scholars, patrons, and professionals in the field who have made major contributions to the study and appreciation of the decorative arts. 2020-21 Honorees include: Outstanding Patron, Dr. Stephen K. Scher; Outstanding Lifetime Achievement, David Revere McFadden; Outstanding Mid-Career Scholar, Sanchita Balachandran; Outstanding Dealer, Cristina Grajales.

- **Horowitz Book Prize**

The Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Book Prize is awarded annually to the best book on the decorative arts, design history, or material culture of the Americas. Past winners include Cheryl Finley's *Committed to Memory: The Art of the Slave Ship Icon* and Gary Urton's *Inka History in Knots: Reading Khipus as Primary Sources*.

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About Bard Graduate Center

As the leading research institute in the United States dedicated to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture, Bard Graduate Center has pioneered the study of objects as a means to better understand the cultural history of the material world. Offering experiences for scholars, students, and the general public alike, Bard Graduate Center is built on multidisciplinary study and the integration of research, graduate teaching, and public exhibitions.

Since its founding in 1993, BGC has established a network of more than 400 alumni who work in leading museums, universities, and institutions worldwide to advance new ways of thinking about material culture.

Bard Graduate Center's classrooms and library are located at 38 West 86th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. BGC Gallery is located at 18 West 86th Street. bgc.bard.edu

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